

March 19, 2015

EXHIBIT #7  
DATE 3/20/15  
HB 604

Dear HB 604 Committee:

I am a nurse, now retired, and have been a runner for thirty-seven years. My husband and I are residents of Florence, Montana and I use and enjoy the trail along the highway most every day. When I first started running we were residents of Missoula, but moved to Florence in 1978. For many years I ran on Old Highway 93 in Florence and I have had several close encounters with cars as they passed by too closely. I would imagine it alarmed the drivers of those cars and it certainly was concerning for me. Now I run regularly on the trail.

When the trail was built at the time of the highway expansion some years ago, it truly opened a door of enjoyment and exercise. Because the trail is only two blocks from our home, we see that it is in use on a constant basis by individuals and families. To enjoy being outside and exercise in any fashion, but not having to worry about safety with cars, has to have many positive health factors. If nothing else, it helps people to exercise and enjoy the outside more readily, but the safety factor should not be ignored. Many families use the trail with young folks on bikes or in strollers. Some children ride their bikes to school using the trail. Keeping the trail in clean, working order is quite important to me and to many others in Western Montana.

Thank you for consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Linda Jeanne Simmerman  
5456 Wildlife Way  
Florence, Montana